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ABSTRACT

The Colorado Preschool Program (CPP) serves at-risk preschool children in community programs, including Head Start programs, private for-profit programs, non-profit programs, and programs within public schools. This 2002 report to the Colorado General Assembly provides information on the effectiveness of major early childhood education programs, such as the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project and the Abecedarian Project; the effectiveness of the CPP; and the data to be collected by districts receiving the CPP funded full-day kindergarten slots. Findings from the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) indicate that although the average child enrolled in CPP has 3.7 risk factors, they scored as well as or better than the state average. In addition to the CSAP, districts using a wide variety of additional measures to determine the effectiveness of CPP report that CPP participants make over the expected year's growth in language development and that most were functioning at or above grade level in kindergarten. Parents of a participating child believe their child has benefited, believe the child has the needed skills to succeed in school, and feel comfortable participating in their child's education. Statements from parents illustrate their satisfaction with the program and the gains their children have made in the CPP. Although formal data are not yet available, during monitoring visits, districts with CPP funded full-day kindergarten programs reported that children participating in the full-day programs are developing skills at a much faster rate than those in the traditional half day programs. (KB)

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Colorado Preschool Program

2002 Report

A Report to the Colorado General Assembly

January 2002

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Colorado Preschool Program
2002 Report

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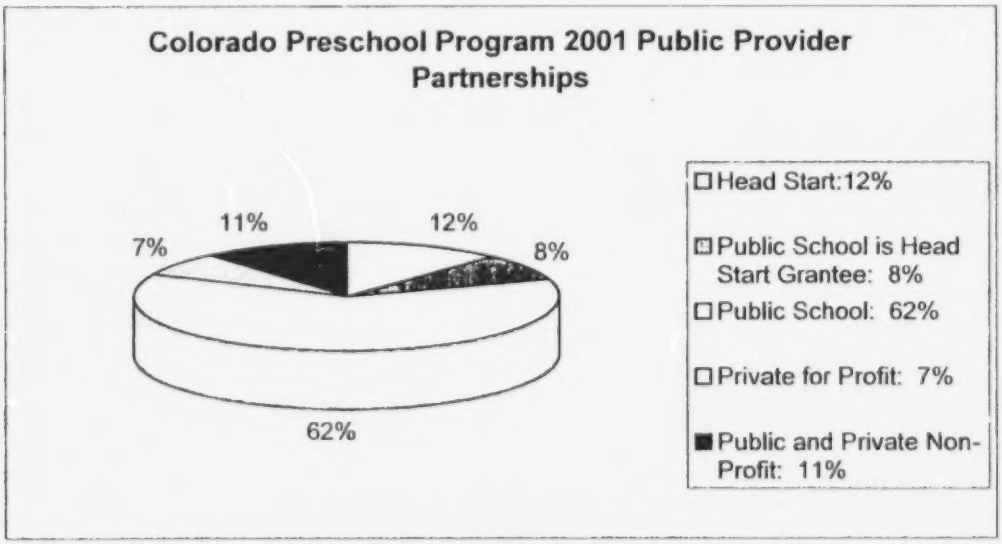
COLORADO PRESCHOOL PROGRAM FACTS:

The Colorado Preschool Program (CPP) was enacted by the General Assembly as part of the Public School Finance Act of 1988. The program serves children who lack overall learning readiness due to family risk factors, who are in need of language development, or who are receiving aid as neglected or dependent children. These indicators predict children are more likely to need special services in later years and eventually to drop out of school if intervention is not provided. The program serves 4- and 5- year-old children in the year before they are eligible for kindergarten.

- The Colorado Preschool Program (CPP) serves 10,050 children each year in 145 of Colorado's 178 districts.
- One thousand of these 10,050 slots must be used to provide full day kindergarten services.
- School districts report children who participate in CPP have an average of 3.71 risk factors in their lives.
- Eight additional school districts have expressed an interest this year in participating in CPP.
- CPP serves 14.8% of the four year olds in the state.
- In 2001, 75 districts estimated they had 4,425 children that were CPP eligible, but were unable to serve them because of a lack of CPP slots.
- Fifty-nine of the school districts participating in the Colorado Preschool Program are active participants in the Consolidated Child Care Pilots.



Public School Finance Unit: December 3, 2001

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What the research is telling us:

The most well-known outcome study of both short- and long-term benefits of early childhood education is the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project. The most recent assessment, when the subjects were 27 years old, concludes that adults born in poverty who attended a high-quality active learning preschool program at ages three and four have fewer criminal arrests, higher earnings and property wealth and greater commitment to marriage than those who did not attend the good preschool. Over the participants' lifetimes, an estimated $7.16 is saved for every dollar invested. Educational achievements were significantly different between the groups attending preschool and those that didn't, with 71% vs. 54% respectively completing 12th grade or higher.

The 1999 follow-up study, "The Children of the Cost, Quality & Outcomes Study Go to School" find that high quality child care experiences, in terms of both classroom practices and teacher-child relationships, enhance children's abilities to take advantage of the educational opportunities in school. Child care quality was related to basic cognitive skills (language and math) and children's behavioral skills in the classroom (thinking/attention skills, sociability, problem behaviors and peer relations). They also found that the influences of child care quality were sustained through second grade for children who have traditionally been at risk of not doing well in school.

The Abecedarian Project found that, at age 15, those children who had received a preschool intervention scored higher on achievement tests and had lower incidence of special education and grade retention. At age 21, the children who received the preschool intervention were twice as likely to still be in school or to have attended a four-year college.

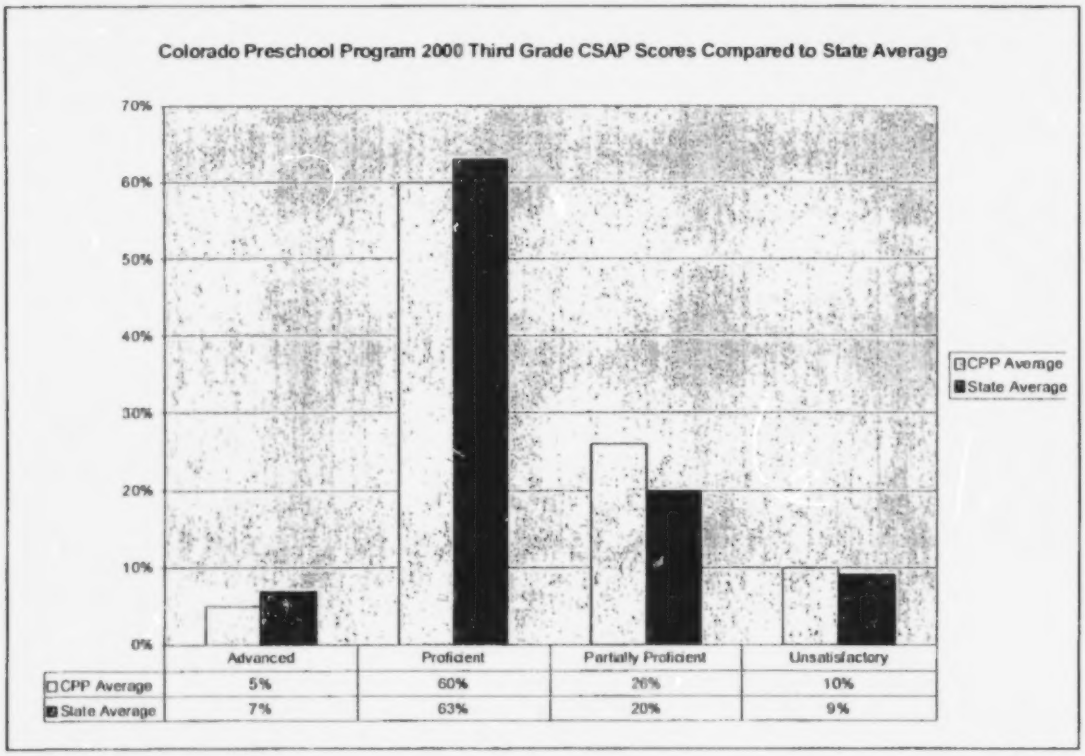
In the most comprehensive and long-running study of preschool to date, researchers assessed 1,500 children over the course of 15 years who had participated in the Chicago Child Parent Center (CPC) Program in 1985. They have found that poor children who attend intensive preschool programs are more likely to graduate from high school and less likely to be arrested than poor children who have not participated in such programs. They also found that CPC participants were associated with lower rates of grade retention and special education services.

The Most Significant Findings and Policy Implications from a Decade's Worth of Rigorous ECE Research Are:

- Quality early care and education programs have proven their effectiveness in improving the developmental outcomes of low-income and disadvantaged children. These programs produce long-term as well as short term gains both on measures of school achievement and success in young adulthood.
- Quality matters. If improved outcomes for children are to be achieved, any program of early care and education must meet adequate standards of quality and must be provided with enough funding to do so without inflating the cost paid by parents.
- Quality is particularly important for children from low-income families. Disadvantaged children are harmed more by poor quality care and benefit more from high quality care than children from middle- and upper-income families. (Source: National Association of Child Advocates, *Making Investments in Young Children: What the Research on Early Care and Education Tells Us.* Washington, DC: National Association of Child Advocates, December 2000)

Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP):

School districts have been able to look at how children who were in CPP as four year olds did on their third grade reading assessments. School districts report that the average child enrolled in CPP has 3.7 risk factors in their life that put them at risk for school failure. Given this fact, when scores were compiled across the state, there were clear positive results:



	Advanced	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Unsatisfactory
CPP Average	5%	60%	26%	10%
State Average	7%	63%	20%	9%

Public School Finance Unit January 2002

Closing the Achievement Gap

Greeley 6 School District in Weld County has been collecting data on how "CPP graduates" are performing on the CSAP and other district assessments in third, fourth and fifth grade. They have found that students who have participated in CPP are scoring as well on these assessments as their peers, and in some cases better than the district wide average.

What is even more important to report is that on the 3rd Grade 2000 CSAP 52.31% of the CPP graduates who are Hispanic scored advanced or proficient, while only 36% of the other Hispanic students in the district received that same score.

Additional Evidence of CPP Effectiveness.....

Besides compiling and reviewing the CSAP scores for CPP participants, districts use a variety of additional measures to determine the effectiveness of CPP. Below is just a sample of what some of those measures are. Given the fact that CPP serves the population that is most at risk of school failure, these results provide additional evidence that CPP funds are well invested.

In Pueblo School District 60, kindergarten teachers are given a very simple survey in January. Based on the current Kindergarten Progress Report Card, they are asked to determine if children who participated in the Colorado Preschool Program last year were functioning:

1) below grade level
2) at grade level
3) above grade level

They found 73% of CPP participants were functioning at or above grade level when they were in kindergarten.

The Monte Vista School district reported 76% of their CPP students made over the expected year's growth in language development as measured by chronological age expectations, with the average growth per child being 1 year and 5 months and 7 children scoring over two years growth.

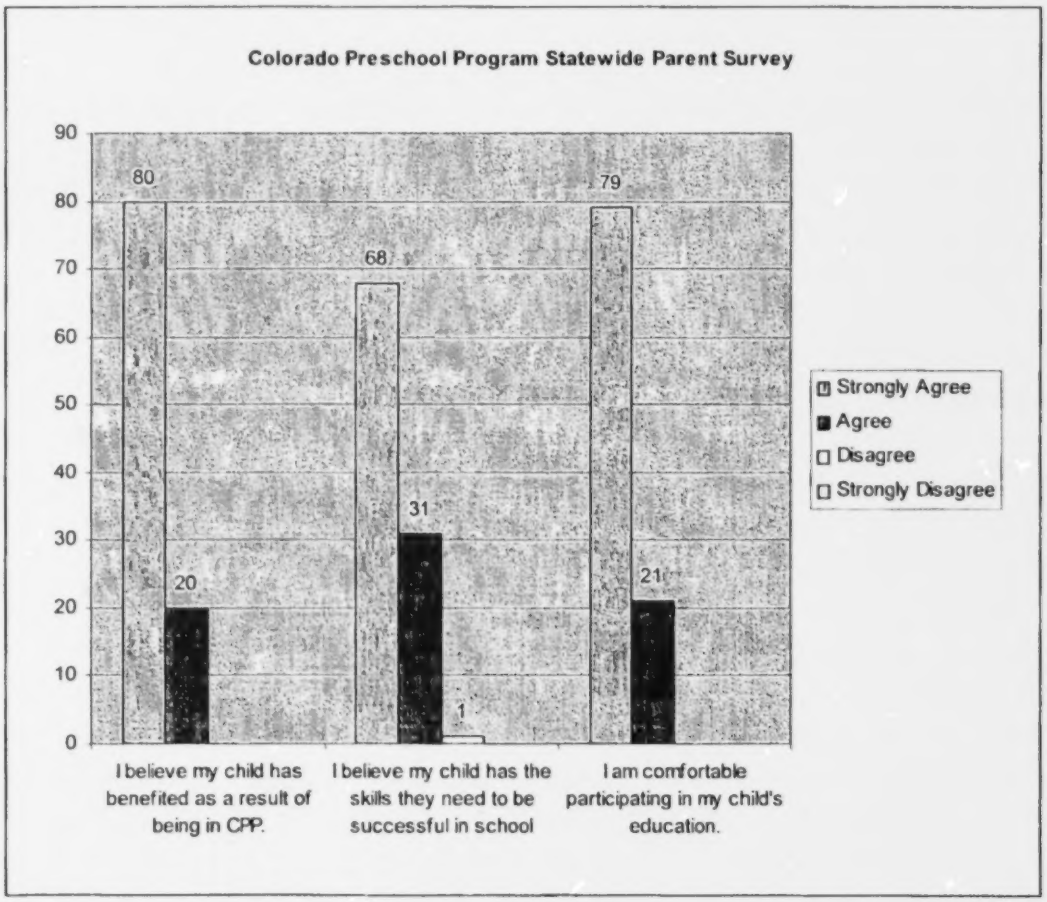
Fremont RE-1 reports that on kindergarten readiness and CSAP scores for children who were in the CPP program, CPP graduates are consistently within 10 percentage points of the district averages.

In the Boulder Valley School District 36% of CPP students have English as a second language. The district average is 8.9%.

When reviewing whether CPP participants had met performance targets in the primary grades, the district reported that 78% of CPP students had met performance targets. The District average is 79%. In addition, 24% of past CPP students were on an ILP, while the district average is 23% and the percentage of past CPP students who are in ESL programs and SPED programs appears very similar to the district wide average.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND SATISFACTION

Studies of individual families show that what the family does is more important to student success than family income or education. This is true whether the family is rich or poor, whether the parents finished high school or not, or whether the child is in preschool or in the upper grades. CPP requires programs to have a written plan for parent involvement and parents are asked to enter into an agreement with the program that specifies what this involvement looks like. Programs that are able to engage parents in their child's education can strengthen parents' ability to support their children and reinforce the learning that occurs in the classroom. Early childhood programs can break down barriers with families, such as lack of trust in schools and fear of failure, to set a pattern of parent involvement that can be followed through a child's school career.
This year each CPP program surveyed families and asked the same three questions. The survey responses below are a strong indication of the effectiveness of CPP.



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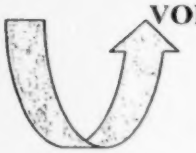
VOICES OF FAMILIES:



This program has prepared both my child and myself for the first step in education and the years to come. The CPP helps those families who otherwise may not be able to fund this very important introduction to education.

Northglenn/Thornton Parent

We the parents of _____thank you for teaching so many things to our daughter. For example, she learned words in English. Also she learned to sing the songs you have taught her. When she reaches home she tells me all the things she has learned in the classroom and when her father comes home she sings the songs she learned in the classroom. We give you thanks.

Aurora Parent

We were very grateful to be able to send our daughter this year and not delay her education. She has really enjoyed school, and wants to go even if she is sick. She has excelled in ways that would not have been possible without this program. It is a valuable asset to our community.

Akron Parent

I have learned that participating is very important to our child and this helps him in many ways.

Fountain #8 School District Parent

I would like to express my deepest gratitude for the Preschool Program's influence in my child's life. My daughter has been highly motivated to learn since she began the program last Fall. Each day when she returns from school she makes a point to sit down and share with me the new ideas she has learned. She also "teaches" me the lessons and activities she is working on at school.

Alamosa Parent

I have met other children's parents and feel more welcome around them than I did before because I am only 23 with 2 children and this is the first group of people who haven't treated me less because of that.

Glenwood Springs Parent

My son has better social skills, enjoys going to school and participates more in a group setting. Preschool has taught him more than I thought it would, like the basis for reading and writing.

Otis Parent

FULL DAY KINDERGARTEN

School districts receiving the CPP funded full-day kindergarten slots met this Fall and after reviewing research on full-day kindergarten programs agreed to compile the following data over the next five years on their program:

- Third grade CSAP scores of children who participate in the full-day program
- Attendance records through the primary grades
- Number of children placed on ILP's in later grades
- Parent satisfaction survey
- Pre- and post scores on assessments given during the kindergarten year. This assessment could be identified by the district and should meet the requirements of the Colorado Literacy Act, which districts are complying with already.

No data is yet available on the effectiveness of this program but in the monitoring visits of these programs, districts report children are developing skills at a much faster rate than in the traditional half day programs.

Voices of Teachers and Administrators in CPP Funded Full-Day Kindergarten Programs:

"CPP full-day kindergarten has given students the extra support they need, academically, socially and emotionally to help ensure success in the classroom and readiness for first grade. The smaller class size has provided an environment for more individualized instruction in areas that might not otherwise occur within a larger class setting."

"Student growth has been the main benefit of the CPP funded full-day kindergarten. In the pre-assessment many of these students could not write their names, color appropriately, did not know letters, sounds, words and were lacking in social skills."

"I love teaching full-day kindergarten. I have the time to get to know my kids well and meet each of their individual needs. I would never want to go back to teaching half-day kindergarten."

"Having a 15 to 2 ratio in kindergarten is like a dream come true. This is the best year of teaching I've ever had. The students get so much more of my attention and I can really get to know them. "

"It is so wonderful to have only 15 children in a class. They get more individualized instruction. We want to meet all the guidelines so we can keep the program."

"Teachers and paraprofessionals are impressed with the growth of their students."

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